



**FLORA & FAUNA
GUARANTEE**

NOMINATION NO. 355
ITEM NO. T9820

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Predation of native wildlife by the Cat *Felis catus* (Potentially Threatening Process)

Date of receipt of the nomination: 30 January 1995
Date of preliminary recommendation: 7 February 1995
Date of final recommendation: 18 August 1995

File No.: 95/0476

Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided. In the opinion of the SAC the process is adequately defined and described.

The nominated process is the predation of native wildlife by the Cat *Felis catus*. The term 'cat' includes both owned cats (those which live in close association with humans who supply a cat's needs for food, shelter and health), unowned cats (free-living cats, totally independent of humans, which obtain food by hunting and scavenging in the wild) and those in between these two categories. Unowned cats may become semi-reliant on humans during times of difficult environmental conditions, and the reverse may also occur with owned cats becoming relatively independent if conditions are favourable. All are biologically the same and are present throughout Victoria in a wide range of habitats.

The range of flora or fauna affected or potentially affected was adequately stated in the nomination.

Significance of the threat which the potentially threatening process poses or has the potential to pose was adequately stated in the nomination.

Eligibility for listing as a potentially threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1991*.

Evidence that criteria are satisfied:

Criterion 5.1 *The potentially threatening process, in the absence of appropriate management, poses or has the potential to pose a significant threat to the survival of a range of flora or fauna.*

Evidence:

Predation by cats has the potential to depress local population sizes, cause local extinctions of species, and in conjunction with other threats have a significant impact on species' survival. Threatened species are at most risk from cat predation; these include species that have very localised and/or fragmented distributions, occur in low densities, have low reproductive rates and slow growth rates, and occur in areas where cat numbers are high (e.g. close to human habitation). Species which nest on the ground, are colonial, or have inadequate behavioural responses to predators are also particularly susceptible to cat predation.

Cats are an essential part of the life cycle of Toxoplasmosis, a parasitic disease. The disease can cause a range of illnesses and death in Australian marsupials, which are very susceptible to the disease.

Sub-criterion 5.1.1 *The potentially threatening process, in the absence of appropriate management, poses or has the potential to pose a significant threat to the survival of two or more taxa.*

Evidence:

Cat predation was considered one of the major causes of death of Eastern Barred Bandicoots at Hamilton (Seebeck *et al.* 1991). Of 87 dead Bandicoots examined, 40% of the juveniles had been taken by cats.

There are records of cats taking a number of species which are listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, or recognised as threatened. These include Brush-tailed Phascogales *Phascogale tapoatafa*, Common Bent-wing Bats *Miniopterus schreibersii*, Grey-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis*, Paucident Planigales *Planigale gilesi*, Freckled Ducks *Stictonetta naevosa* and Blue-billed Ducks *Oxyura australis*.

The recommendation reports and/or Action Statements for 27 species (14 birds, 11 mammals, and 2 reptiles) have mentioned that introduced predators, including cats, are a threat.

Background Information

- The *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* aims to promote the responsible ownership of cats and protection of the environment.
- "Predation of native wildlife by the introduced cat" is listed as a key threatening process under the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992*, and a Threat Abatement Plan is currently being prepared.
- The number of owned cats in Victoria is estimated to be between 725 000 (Seebeck *et al.* 1991) and 900 000 (McCrory 1988), while the number of unowned cats is estimated to be about 300 000 (McCrory 1988).

Advertisement for public comment

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for public comment for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

"The Age" - on 24 May 1995

"The Weekly Times" - on 24 May 1995

The Government Gazette - on 25 May 1995

Submissions closed on 30 June 1995.

Further evidence provided:

No public comments were received by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

No evidence was provided to warrant a review of the Scientific Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendation that the potentially threatening process is eligible for listing.

Documentation

The published information and research data provided to the SAC have been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Section 11 of the Act because primary criterion 5.1 is satisfied.

The SAC also concluded that sub-criterion 5.1.1 has been satisfied and that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 5.1 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criterion 5.1.1 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 3 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

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Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date



Dr. Malcolm Calder
Convenor

3 November 1995